

# The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, July 16. 1695.



Quest. 1.

**A** Virtuous man marry'd a wife, purely to live honest. After several years Cohabitation, and Direct Children born and yet living, she has forsaken her Husband, and obstinately refuses to live with him, or so much as to see him. He's under great Temptations to that sin which he married to avoid, which he now in vain endeavours to overcome. Continence is Gods gift, all persons have it not, and you know the Apostles advice in that matter, which the prudent accordingly follow'd. On the whole, he desires your Judgment, whether, his wife continuing thus obstinate, and without any cause refusing his Company, he may't take another in her room, or what means he ought to take in order to reclaim her.

**Ans.** 'Tis strange she should thus forsake him without any cause, and either falsehood or unkindness: If he has been guilty of either, he ought to do all he can towards a Recompence and Reconciliation; if he has not, but been both faithful and obliging, and taken care to provide for her, one would think it should not be so difficult to reconcile 'em, by the means of some common Friend to 'em both: Especially if she's a person of piety or Virtue; which would soon make her consider that nothing can warrant such her separation, besides a notorious breach of the marriage vow in her Husband, or absolute neglect of provision for her: Consequently she's guilty of a great sin in forsaking him, when he has not first abdicated her, and exposing him to such Temptations as she knows she does, when the Scripture has expressly told her that she has not power over her self—but her husband.

As for him, he can't be at Liberty to marry another, unless he can not only get a divorce from her, but particular Licence for a new marriage from the supreme Judicature of the Nation, which if he cannot do, nor get his wife reconciled, he has no way but frequent fasting, and mortification, and such honest and prudent methods as he must have us'd had he never marry'd; which must have such good effects as he desires, tho with some difficulty, for we should never have been commanded to live honest, had there not been a possibility of doing so.

Quest. 2. When may we expect the Corpuscularian Philosophy to be received in the Universities?

**Ans.** 'Tis generally received there already, tho all are at liberty to take what they like best on't, and leave the rest alone.

Quest. 3. A late Author says, Moles have better Eyes than those that won't see a resignation of providence in the Dimness of their Eyes, which are made only to see the Light, not other objects. What's your Judgment in the case?

**Ans.** Mr. Hobbs himself, and another Philosopher not much more famous for piety, have both own'd that those persons are wittully blind who won't see and acknowledge the wisdom of the Creator in the curious machine of the Eye, which they think sufficient to convince the greatest Atheist in the world. What then would they have thought, had they seen the curious discoveries and observations of Briggs and others on that subject, which since their time have appear'd in the world. Among other mistakes of the ancients, the blindness of the mole was one wherein they were very positive, but tho this be not true, 'tis certain that its Eyes are extremely small, and indeed almost invisible, vastly disproportionable to such a Body, wherein at least, the wisdom of the Creator may be clearly seen, that Creature, as well as all others, having its Eyes to plac'd as to be most serviceable to the course of Life appointed for it. Now the mole being to live underground, were its Eyes proportionable to its bulk, 'twould endanger the loss of 'em; especially when he's a constant miner, for which end his hands are made so short, and extremely strong, and broad, and set on in the most

convenient manner. Nor is't only the mole, but, as has been said, all other Creatures, have their Eyes especially as well as other parts, exactly fitted for their particular way of Living. As in Cats, Owls, &c. So Horses, and all Creatures that Graze, and are to travel, have their Eyes far, on both sides of the Head; Swine, who are to root in dirt have theirs very far from their Snout, (which is long,) and also very small, much of the same make with those of the mole, and for the same reason. And if hereby some Creatures are more capable of doing an injury to mankind, they are also highly serviceable to him some way or other, tho his Laziness may oftentimes hinder his discovering their particular use.

Quest. 4. Whence comes it pass that the Indians suffer pain so unconcern'dly?

**Ans.** Partly from Custom, partly perhaps from the robust and athletic constitution of their bodies, much stronger generally then those of white men, as we may see evidently in the Skulls of Negro's, &c. there being no doubt but the more delicate and tender the constitution, the more impatient of pain, generally speaking, are those who are so unhappy to have them.

Quest. 5. How many just motives may there be to induce a prudent man to Marry?

**Ans.** O! An inconceivable number, some will tell ye, at least, 00000000, in a modest computation; But we must instance in some particulars to make it more evident. A marry'd man has great conveniences in having one to scratch his Linnen, mend his Stockings, brush his Coat, Comb his Head, &c. to mind him when his Face is not clean, his Nails paired, his Breath sweet, and the like: 'Tis true the Sparks will tell ye all these great Ends of Life may be answer'd without Matrimony; but then they must be always rambling, and Strolling and Caterwauling, and have a strange fancy for breaking their shins, or necks, or at least being whipt through the Lungs in an honourable way, without which an Intrigue is not worth a farthing. To be grave, the arguments for marriage are many, and in most cases, very strong as it cannot be deny'd but there are many against it, both too many to insist on: only this we think will be granted by all, that the best motive for it is a Good wife, as a Bad one is the strongest against it.

Quest. 6. Will a wise man ever trust any man with all, or great part of what he is worth?

**Ans.** A generous man may, but a wise man won't, unless he can't help it, and then 'tis the greatest wisdom to appear generous.

Quest. 7. How can we be said to be in a state of Tryal in this world, in relation to God?

**Ans.** Not at all in relation to him, unless humanely speaking, because he's omniscient, all Tryal being properly in relation to our selves, or other men, and consequently either for Purification or Example.

Quest. 8. May we ever marry without leave of Parents?

**Ans.** Only where they have first encourag'd a match, and afterwards, unreasonably disapprove it; unless there should be any other rare cases, where there might be some necessity of marriage.

Quest. 9. May a Virgin save her Chastity by killing the Aggressor, if she cannot otherwise?

**Ans.** Yes, or a woman either (if they can have the Heart to do't) as all Casuists, we think, are agreed. For if you may lawfully defend your self so as to kill a Robber upon the high way, if you can't otherwise preserve your money, much more sure here.

Quest. 10. How can you solve this Phenomenon? A certain young man, by giving a maid some powder in her drink, caus'd her to follow him out of one Company into another, kissing him before 'em all, and not regarding any else in the room. Whence comes this strange power of these Philtres?



Philistines over the will, so as to determine it to one person more than another.

*Ans.* This Virgin would scarce have liked the Replication of the former question; but to the business, If there be any such thing really effected it must be either by *natural Magic*, some crabbed occult quality or other (the *je ne seay quoy* of the Philosophers) or else plainly Diabolically, and downright witch-craft.

*Quest. 11.* In the 23 of Isaiah, at the 8 v. It's said the Sun return'd ten degrees, by which degrees it was before gone down in the Dial of Ahaz: Was this miracle by a real retrograde motion of the Sun (or rather seemed to be, because of the diurnal motion of the Earth) thereby causing an universal difference of that day from others, or is it to be understood only concerning the shadow, and that in the Dial of Ahaz, as some learned persons will have it. For if so, how could it possibly be affirm'd to be a Miracle, since it might have easily been perform'd by only changing the Situation of that Dial?

*Ans.* First for the Dial, then the miracle. This is, without doubt, the oldest Dial we meet with in History, and some say one of the strangest, for they describe it, not as drawn on the outside of any wall or house, but contriv'd within a winding stair-case, so that every step bears proportion to the distance of an Hour. The 70 here make use of the word *αὐλὸς ὀρεῶν*, which signifies either *stairs*, or *degrees*, and has it every where in the Titles of the *Psalms*, where we read, a *Psalms of Degrees*. *Adrianus* thinks 'twas set up against the Walls of the Temple, and made by Ahaz out of the brazen Altar, tho' that the Scripture tells us he ordered to be left for himself to enquire by, more certain 'tis that he took away the 12 brazen Oxen, and put the Sea upon a pavement, 1 Cor. 16. 17. And if he only built this Dial, and gave it to the Temple instead of it, 'twas much like the more modern *Exchanges* (which we can't say were no *Robberies*) of *fat manners*, for *lean Improvements*.

For the *Miracle* it must certainly be such, whether 'twas the Sun or the shadow went backward. If the form of the Dial were as 'tis represented, it could not be by the change of the Situation of the *Column*, which might perhaps have been done by some accidental alteration. But there could be no practice in the case because *Herod* had his option, and might have chosen whether the shadow should have gone forwards or backward, and perhaps might see this Dial, as he lay in his Bed; however it seems to have been near the House of the Lord, if not upon it, as describ'd already. *Lightfoot*, with other learned men, is of opinion that 'twas the Sun it self went backward, and the miracle not confin'd to that Dial only, and that 'twas this miracle which brought the Ambassadors, and Presents to the King of Babylon. *Josephus* only mentions the shadow of the Sun, not the Sun it self, which was a deal too big for Ahaz's Dial, and therefore it must be understood the shadow only where the Sun is mention'd, as in the 28 of *Isa.* Tho' neither there, nor in the *Kings*, nor *Chronicles*, is it said that the Sun and Moon stood still in the Heavens, as in the case of *Joshua*, where 'tis added, there was no day like it, before or after it, when the Book of *Joshua* was writ, nor even since, because both Sun and Moon were then fix'd, whereas, here at most, 'twas the Sun only.

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